

February 1, 2002

Memorandum

To: Heads of Bureaus and Offices

From: Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget /**signed**/

Subject: Use of Biobased Products by Department of the Interior Facilities
(ER 02/15)
(Reply Due: February 15, 2002)

As one part of our renewed effort to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, I want to make you aware of the potential benefits of using biobased products. There are many manufacturers that are now producing commercial products that use vegetable-based starch or oil in place of petroleum. The manufacture of these products puts to productive use agricultural by-products that would otherwise be waste and, thereby, provides additional revenue streams for American farmers. Many of these products are also beneficial to the environment - reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, containing fewer volatile organic compounds, and by producing less toxic combustion-related compounds. Biobased fuels and lubricants can be more readily biodegradable than petroleum-based alternatives, which is an advantage we particularly would like to promote to the public, consistent with Interior's natural resource trustee responsibilities.

Attached is a copy of the Fall 2001 *Closing the Circle News* published by the White House Task Force on Recycling. In this issue, you will find a list of the different types of biobased products that are commercially available, along with resources for more information. You also will see that the Department of the Interior has already been identified as a leader in the use of biobased products with applications highlighted from Yellowstone National Park, Mt. Ranier National Park and the Main Interior Building. Also attached is the *Greening the Government Showcase* brochure that summarizes the achievements of the 2001 White House Closing the Circle Awards, many of whom have incorporated biobased product use into their greening efforts. The Department of the Interior was honored with five awards; please read about our outstanding award recipients in this attachment.

As the Agency Environmental Executive, I will be convening the *Greening Interior Partnership Group* to help oversee these and other related efforts in the near future. Attached is a list of the previously designated bureau contacts to this group. By **February 15, 2002**, please respond with any changes to your bureau or office's designated representatives to this group.

If you would like additional copies of the *Closing the Circle News* or the *Greening the Government Showcase* brochure to distribute or if you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Heather Davies, Office of Environmental Police and Compliance at (202) 208-7884.

Attachments

cc: Assistant Secretaries
REO's
Hazmat Contacts